

SHINE Historic Downtown Salem Walkers' Guide

1.4 miles

Note: To appreciate the architecture of these buildings, it is necessary to view them from across busy streets as well as viewing entrances. Although the walk is not long in distance, it requires strolling at a leisurely pace. Look for National Register plaques and interpretive panels. Enjoy!

The tour starts outside the lobby of the Convention Center, at the southeast corner of Commercial and Ferry Street. You are standing at the site of the 1870 **Marion Hotel**, a political & social center for 100 years until it burned in 1971.

Immediately to the south, across Commercial Street is the 1890 **Burke Building** (267 Commercial Street SE), a fruit and produce house with the Illahe Club meeting upstairs. In 1912 this club merged with the Board of Trade. This became the Salem Chamber of Commerce in 1922.

Directly ahead, at the southwest corner, Oregon's statehood was announced (1859) from the Nesmith Building. (Now Umpqua Bank) At that time, the Governor's office and the State Supreme Court were housed there, The building was demolished in the late 1950s.

Cross Ferry Street to the northeast corner. Here, in 1847, Thomas Cox built Salem's first general store. The building later became Salem's first post office before burning in 1888. (Now houses various Marion County and other business offices.)

Cross Commercial Street to the northwest corner of this intersection. Completed in 2023, the new Holman Hotel displays a plaque commemorating the history of this site. The original Holman Building was Oregon's Legislative Hall from 1857 to 1878. It also contained the Secretary of State and State Treasurer. It later housed various businesses until the late 1940s when it was replaced by the Marion Car Rental and Park.

Turn right and walk north on Commercial. Across the street at the State Street intersection, is Salem's first financial institution, the former **Ladd and Bush Bank** founded in 1869 by Asahel Bush, II (1824-1913). He was a prominent figure in Salem's financial and political history. In 1967 the building was renovated and expanded on State Street. (It is now US National Bank)

Turn left and walk on south side of State Street, looking at buildings on the north side. On the northwest corner is the 1909 **US National Bank/ Pioneer Trust**

(109-119 Commercial Street NE). It was the first steel and concrete fire-resistant building in Salem and included all the latest banking conveniences when built by J. P. Rogers, owner of the US National Bank of Salem. After acquisition of Ladd and Bush Bank by U.S. National Bank in 1940, it became Pioneer Trust.

Next is the 1930 **Salvation Army Building** (241 State Street). Arriving in Salem in the early 1890s, the group's many activities revolved around practicing Christian principles. They became recognized as one of the leading religious groups contributing to prison reform, visiting the sick and elderly and helping feed the hungry.

Continuing, the 1870 **Smith and Wade Building** (229-237 State Street) was originally owned by the Boise family. By the 1920s the west half housed George E. Waters, Inc., a wholesale cigar distributor. The east half was the Gospel Mission.

On the northeast corner is the 1913 **Boise Building** (217 State Street). The original owner, R. B. Boise, Jr., was a well-known northwest journalist and owner of the Oregon Statesman. The architect was Fred Legg who also designed structures at the Oregon State Fairgrounds.

Cross State Street and walk north on Front. This had always been an industrial site, polluting the air and the river until 1962. In the 1990s, Riverfront Park was developed,

The abandoned 1911 **White's Feed Store**, on Front Street behind the Boise Building, is important to Salem's agricultural history. By the early 1920s, D. A. White had immense warehouses on Front and Water streets, fostering a wholesale and retail seed business with operations throughout the U.S. and in Europe.

Retrace your steps to State Street again, turn left looking at the buildings on your right.

The 1908 **Manning Company Building** (210 State Street) replaced a wooden building occupied by blacksmiths and carriage makers. Salem Seed and Implement Company was located there for many years.

At 246 State Street is the 1908 **Catlin and Lynn Building**, built on the site of the Tiger Engine Fire House, No. 2 organized in 1869. It continued as a volunteer organization until 1893 when the city created a paid fire department that moved into the Court House Fire Station.

At the corner, look across Commercial Street:

The **Dearborn Building** (110 Commercial Street NE) was constructed in the 1860s. When Samuel Adolph and his brother-in-law Edward Rostein opened their Real Estate and General Insurance business in 1931, their office was in this building and remained so until 1963.

Cross State Street and look across the street as you walk.

The 1880 **Capital National Bank Building**, adjoining Pioneer Trust (129 Commercial Street NE,) was remodeled in 1892 to a Richardsonian Romanesque style and remodeled again in 1950 by James L. Payne. Placing a modern front onto the building's ground floor required holding up the top stories, consisting of over 100 tons of stone.

The 1889 **Bush-Breyman Block** (147 Commercial Street NE) has always housed retail stores. When built, it was twice the size: the Bush portion on the north was damaged by fire and subsequently demolished.

As you continue toward Court Street, you may notice a solitary red post, the reminder of the section of this building that was lost by fire. The remaining northern portion of this structure is **Bush and Bray Block** (179-197 Commercial Street NE). The popular Busick & Sons Grocery occupied it from 1924 until 1970.

Cross Court Street and continue north, looking across the street.

Only 70 of the original 120 feet of the 1867 **The Starkey – McCully Building** (223-233 Commercial Street NE) remain. The cast iron decoration is believed to be the oldest of its kind in Oregon. Asa McCully and John L. Starkey built it with money from the California Gold Rush.

1st Nat'l Bank Block (247 Commercial Street NE) was built in 1887 when wooden buildings were being replaced by brick. During the 1940s, it was the Benjamin Forstner Store. His invention of an electric motor made him a wealthy man.

Turn back, retracing your steps. You are passing the entrance to **Eldridge /Greenbaum Building** (240 Commercial Street NE). As Greenbaum's, a popular variety store, it originally extending south to the end of the block. Wilbur Boothby

developed the property in 1890. The third generation of the family operated "Greenbaum's Quilted Forest, a fabric shop there.

At Court Street, turn left.

The rounded corner distinguishes the 1885 **Pearce Building** (305-321 Court Street NE). This building was remodeled in 1940 for two Pearce sisters: Helen, who was the first woman graduate of Willamette University (1915) to earn a doctorate (1930) and Dorothy. Both were well-known local educators. The sisters had acquired the property from their father, George Pearce, owner since 1885.

Midway down the block, **Court Street Dairy Lunch** (347 Court Street NE) was founded in 1929 by Glen Morris. Salem's first "fast food" restaurant continued to be owned and operated by three generations of the Morris family until 1994. The walls are decorated with historical photos.

The 1907 **Paulus Building** (355-357 Court Street), across the alley, was previously the site of Sung Lung Washing and Ironing. The present building was constructed to provide space for a single retail establishment selling furniture. In 1931 Paulus separated the space. Doughton's Hardware occupied the west end of the building for almost sixty years (1934-1991).

At the intersection with Liberty Street, cross. Continue on Court Street.

The second building (after Vernon Jewelers) is the 1916 **Moore Building** (green awning of florist). Wallace W. Moore came to Salem from Kansas in 1910. He soon thereafter founded the Moore Furniture Company and, over time, acquired several properties in Salem. He retired in his fifties to manage his property holdings. In 1947 his wife, Mabel, sold the property to their daughter, Mabel Lucille Knapp, who retained ownership of the property into the 1980s.

As you continue on Court Street you pass the Skiff Block (formerly Norwood Grocery) with Queen Anne architecture in the D'Arcy eastern half of the building.

Return to Liberty Street.

Across Liberty Street, on the southwest corner, is the 1869 **Reed Opera House** (189 Liberty Street NE). This building once housed the Oregon Supreme Court and State Library on the third floor, a 1,500-seat auditorium on the second, and seven stores at street level. Its closing in 1900 was the result of the opening of the Grand Theater. The interior was then redesigned for Joseph Meyers and for Miller's

Department Store. After a major rehabilitation in 1976, the building became the focal point of a major downtown redevelopment.

Look south along the west side of Liberty Street. At State Street is the **Capitol Tower** (Livesley Building). On this block, from the south, are the historic **Gray, Eckerlan, Skiff, McCormack Buildings** and **Reed Opera House**.

Turn right and walk north toward Chemeketa Street.

Across the street (241 Liberty Street NE) is the facade of the 1920s **PGE Building**. (The “Electric Apartment” sign reminds us of 1930s downtown rentals.) This historic structure and the former **Yeater Alliance Store** to the right, later combined as Anderson Sporting Goods store, have had recent renovations.

At the corner, you are passing the site of the 1947 **First National Bank** (later Wells Fargo). This modern building was designed by renowned Portland architect, Pietro Belluschi. Frederick Littman did eight sculptures on the west elevation. This structure was recently demolished for mixed-use complex.

At Chemeketa Street, turn right and walk along the parking lot to High Street. At the corner there is a plaque identifying this as the site of the former **City Hall**. Across the street was the Senator Hotel. (Now the bus station.) This was the center of municipal political life for almost a hundred years between 1880 and 1972 when the City Hall was demolished.

Farther along (237-245 High Street NE) is the **Arthur Moore Building**. In 1923, after buying parts of two lots from Thomas G. and Anna Bligh, he opened a bike shop on the ground floor. He eventually expanded his business to include hunting, fishing, boating and camping equipment.

At the northwest corner (223-233 High Street NE) is the 1923 **T. G. Bligh Building** with a green awning. It has housed the Olson Florist since 1926.

Cross High and Court Streets to stand in front of the Courthouse.

This is a good view (across the street) to the former **Odd Fellows Hall** (187 High Street NE). The main building was designed in Richardson Romanesque style. It was one of the first buildings in Salem with electricity installed. The Grand Theater opened in Odd Fellows Hall in 1900 first as an opera house, then for vaudeville. In the 1930s it showed movies, but its use gradually declined and closed

in 1950. After a period of temporary use by other renters, it has now been extensively renovated.

The adjoining **Hotel Annex** served bus travelers who rented hotel rooms on the second floor for the night, then continued their journey the next morning. The ground floor had a bus station, restaurant, shoeshine and newspaper stand. The third floor was part of the Odd Fellows Lodge where they had card tables and pool tables (and a small bar) for their members.

To your left, the present modern **Marion County Courthouse** is on the site of a former Victorian building, demolished in 1952. On its front lawn stood a large evergreen tree, the fondly remembered community Christmas tree for many years.

Notice the interpretive panel.

Walk south to State Street. Across the street is the 1912 **Masonic Building** (101 High Street SE), built in Mediterranean/Moorish style. This six-floor building on the northwest corner was vacant for a period of years, but has been remodeled and renamed as The Franklin Building. It contains offices, with a ballroom on the upper floor.

Looking to your left at the same corner of State and High Streets, the spire of the **First Methodist Church** is visible one block to the east. Beyond that, the "star trees" of the Willamette University can be seen.

Continue walking to the **Elsinore Theater** (170 High Street SE). It opened in 1926 with a DeMille silent film, "The Volga Boatman". This theater featured film, stage shows and, for a time, movies with vaudeville. The Elsinore has been restored as one of the few remaining examples of Tudor Gothic theater design.

Cross High Street and walk back to State Street. The 1913 **Hubbard** or **Oregon Building** at the southwest corner (to your left) was the original Salem depot for the Oregon Electric Railway, whose Salem-to-Eugene tracks ran down High Street. Harry M. Hawkins and Thomas Roberts bought the Hubbard Building in 1921. During their ownership, the building housed Metropolitan Stores, Sears, and various law offices.

Notice the interpretive plaque indicating this as the site of the former Salem Chinatown.

As you walk to the corner of Liberty and State Streets, you pass the site of the National Register 1890 GreyBelle Building.

At the corner, you see the **Capitol Tower** on State Street, across Liberty Street. It is Salem's only skyscraper at eleven stories tall. This 1926 building was financed by Thomas A. Livesley, a leading hop grower in the Northwest as well as a politician, and Salem entrepreneur. The building has elaborate ornamentation on the north and east elevations from the eleventh floor upward to the parapet. The outer bay has a standing human figure with stylized wings surrounding it. Bearded human faces in relief decorate the upper section of wall.

Before you cross Liberty, look back to see the Key Bank building (416 State Street). It is the site of the former four-story **Guardian Building**. This had been a prominent location for professional offices before it burned in 1947.

Cross State Street to the 1916 **McGilchrist Building** (102 Liberty Street NE). The family was prominent in the commercial, social, and agricultural life of the community. They retained an interest in the McGilchrist Building into the 1960s.

Cross Liberty Street to the 1894 **Gray Building** (105 Liberty Street NE), constructed by three brothers, is on the northwest corner of State and Liberty Streets. In early 1900, Charles Gray sold the building to Russell Catlin and James R. Lynn.

Looking north from this corner, you see again the **Eckerlan** (former Bishop's), **Skiff** (former Montgomery Ward) and **McCormick buildings**. **Reed Opera House** anchors the Court Street corner.

The recently restored 1894 **Eckerlan Building** (145 Liberty NE) was built by the Gray brothers. Eugene Eckerlan bought the property in May 1909. In 1936, Bishop's clothing store for men and boys moved here and remained through the 1960s. The Bishop family was associated with the former Kay Woolen Mills and the present Pendleton Mills.

Cross State Street. Looking north, on the east side of this Liberty Street block, is the restored **Metropolitan Building** (150-160 Liberty Street NE). The original 1916 Hughes-Durbin Building was built at this location and remnants of the original building remain. In the 1920s it became the home of Salem's J.C. Penney store and remained so for the next several decades.

Walk west to pass the **Pomeroy** property (379- 381 State Street), constructed in 1860 as a rooming house. In 1925 Charles T. Pomeroy and A. A. Keene remodeled it into two retail stores. Audrey Pomeroy managed a jewelry store at this location

into the 1990s. Her brother had an adjoining optical shop. A central staircase (with a skylight) divides the two stores.

Over the years several businesses have occupied retail space in the 1917 **Farrar Building**. Midget Market occupied shop space (352 State Street) until 1964. The store at 363 State Street was originally the Central Cigar Store. From 1930 until July of 1981 it was the Smoke Shop. It not only sold cigars, but also served food and drinks at a long double counter; billiard and cards were played in the back. Eventually it became a community institution, serving many including farm and other transient laborers in the Salem area.

Across the alley is the 1902 **Bayne Building** (335-349 State Street). It was the home of numerous retail businesses such as a bakery and the Little King Restaurant. The OK Barber Shop is a long-time occupant in the western half.

Cross at the intersection with Commercial. As you walk back toward Liberty, this section of the bank was formerly the **Patton Building** a pioneer merchandising establishment. It was demolished when the bank building was extended.

Pass the alley. The **J.K. Gill Building** (356 State Street) was constructed in 1868, making it one of the oldest in the historic district. On May 15, 1869, the First Presbyterian Church of Salem was organized on the upper floor of this building. The prominent Northwest book dealer, J.K. Gill, constructed it.

The **Adolph Block** (360-372 State Street) originally housed the Sam Adolph Saloon, a butcher shop and jewelers. After a fire in 1880, this brick building was constructed here to replace the wooden ones that had been destroyed.

Turn right at the **Capitol Tower** and walk one block to the corner of Liberty and Ferry. Ahead of you at the southeast corner of Ferry and Liberty Streets is the former **Crystal Ballroom**. With dancing on the main and second floors, and a swimming pool in the basement, this was a center of entertainment for many years.

Cross Liberty Street, with the Grand Hotel and then the Conference Center to your left. At Ferry Street, cross Commercial Street and you are back where the tour began.